



Indian Program Newsletter

EPA - NEW ENGLAND, REGION 1

Spring/Summer 2003

for the New England Tribes

Aroostook Band of Micmacs
 Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
 Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
 Mohegan Tribe
 Narragansett Indian Tribe
 Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indians, Pleasant Point Reservation (Sipayik)
 Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indians, Indian Township Reservation (Motahkmikuk)
 Penobscot Indian Nation (Burnurwurbskeak)
 Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
 Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation (final recognition in process)

Putep = whale
 Cihqonaqc = turtle
 Cihpolakon = eagle



This issue highlights conferences, new developments and upcoming events that may be of interest to the New England Tribes as EPA Region 1 strives to assist the Tribes in protecting human health and the environment.

Spring/Summer 2003

Above: Ranger shoot-out in Jackman, Maine on Passamaquoddy Reservation lands at the Fall 2002 Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Conference. More on this on page 4.

In This Issue:

- Announcements
- Recent Developments
- Regional News
- Brief
- National/International News Meetings/Workgroups
- Recent and Upcoming Events

Maliseet language

(from Skitkomiq Nutacomit, March 2003)

Muwin = bear
 Qaqsoos = fox

Thank you for your contributions to this issue! We encourage feedback, suggestions and

contributions from the Tribes concerning this information sharing forum.

Please contact Eva Tasaki at:
tasaki.eva@epa.gov or (617)918-1678.

Announcements

The Houlton Band of Maliseets Indians were awarded an EPA grant of \$700,000 for a partnership project to protect the Meduxnekeag River Watershed.

The award was presented to Chief Brenda Commander during the 6th Annual New England Tribal Environmental Training Conference, hosted by the Aroostook Band of Micmacs in Presque Isle, Maine.

Please access www.micmac.epa.us for further information on the conference.

Recent Developments

Tribal Science Council

For information, please call Robert Hillger (617)918-1071, Valerie Bataille (617)918-1674 or Dan Kusnierz (207)827-7361.

Legislative Update:

The following are excerpts from Native American Report, September 6, 2002:

“Indian Country could see improved coordination among senators on Indian-related issues with the newly formed Senate Native American Caucus. Many hope the Caucus could lead to quicker movement of Native American bills through the legislative process.”

“The Caucus consists of eight senators: Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colo.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), Pete Domenici (R-NM), Byron Dorgan (D-ND), John McCain (R-AZ), Tim Johnson (D-SD).”

Tribal Recognition Reform

The following are excerpts from Native American Report, August 9, 2002:

“Tribal Recognition Reform hearings could be in the pipeline when Congress reconvenes in September.

In the face of ongoing concerns about the current tribal recognition process, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) may schedule a hearing on S. 1392, sponsored by Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.). The bill would increase resources for the Bureau of Indian Affairs from \$900,000 to about \$10 million. The staff currently consists of eight people.”

Trust Fund Reform

The following are excerpts from Native American Report, September 6, 2002:

“At the latest full task force meeting Aug. 26 - 28 in Anchorage, Alaska, Interior and Tribal members came to a consensus about the organizational structure of the proposed regional trust centers under the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (according to Sue Masten, Task Force co-chair). The agreement, however, came with the caveat that Tribes must consent to the roles and responsibilities of the regional trust services. Masten is meeting with Tribal representatives Sept. 13 to define the roles.”

“As the draft stands now the commission is an independent entity of the Interior with enforcement and regulatory authority.”

“The next Task Force meeting is September 25 - 27 on the Mohegan Reservation in Connecticut.

Contact: Irene Folstrom NCAI (202)466-7767.”

Homeland Security

The following are excerpts from Native American Report, August 23, 2002:

“For the first time since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Tribes can expect to see federal legislation next month providing funds to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) to tighten security and

disaster preparedness measures on Indian reservations across the country.”

“Members of Rep. Frank Pallone’s (D-NJ) staff have spent the past months working with the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) to draft a bill that would create an Office of Tribal Government Homeland Security within the Homeland Security Department. The bill also would provide not only specific funds for BIA and IHS, but direct funding for individual Tribes.”

““ [The homeland security bill] alludes to Tribes having access to homeland security funds through local government status, but it doesn’t clarify what local government means’, Mark LeBeau, congressional fellow to Pallone’s office told NAR. The bill would eliminate any confusion about the issue”

From Native American Report, September 6, 2002:

“We are at risk - no less or greater than the general population. We have to minimize that risk, but we have less to do it with.”
Quoted: Robert Holden, NCAI

Subsistence Lifestyle

The following are excerpts from Native American Report, June 28, 2002:

“ EPA needs to take into consideration the subsistence lifestyle of Tribes when cleaning up Tribal sites on the National Priorities List (NPL), two Tribal representatives said at the first meeting of the new national advisory council subcommittee of Superfund.”

“At Tribal sites the culture and subsistence lifestyle need to be looked at, said Jason White, environmental specialist at the Office of Environmental Services Cherokee Nation. Our main concern is that a site be cleaned up to a level protective of the ecological resources.”

““If it takes 20 years, that’s acceptable to a tribal community as long as we can use the resources for thousands of years after the cleanup

is complete,’ he said. The goal is to be able to resume cultural activities and the subsistence lifestyle.”

Tribal research Grant to study 16 shellfish harvest areas

The EPA award of a \$1.2-million grant to allow scientists to study 16 shellfish harvest areas in Washington state that are commonly used by the Tribal community will cover sediments, clams, Japanese oysters, butter clams and Dungeness crabs.

The specimens will be analyzed for several chemicals and heavy metals and the results will be delivered in a culturally appropriate way to the Swinomish Tribe and other surrounding Tribes, according to Nigel Fields of EPA’s Office of research and Development.

The project is intended to develop and implement mitigation measures to reduce health risks from shellfish consumption. Tribal populations may be especially at high risk for environmentally-caused diseases as a result of their subsistence lifestyles, occupations, and/or environmental contaminants that impact Tribal lands.

The study will look at whether the Swinomish have been exposed to contaminants when they eat shellfish from their traditional harvesting areas. It will explore whether this exposure contributes to the high incidence of health-related problems on their reservation.

The grant was awarded through the Science To Achieve Results program (STAR). For more information, please access <http://es.epa.gov/ncer>

(From Native American Report, June 14, 2002)

EPA-Tribal Fish Contamination Study Adds Fuel Against Proposed Dredging

Excerpts from Native American Report, August 23, 2002:

“The results of a fish contamination study along the Columbia River Basin has added fuel to Tribal opposition against proposed federal

dredging projects, which some say could stir up contaminated sediments that already threaten Tribal health.”

“According to the study, the fish-heavy diet of adult Tribal members, many of whom eat up to 48 meals of fish each month, raises hazard levels of the fish to between 8 and 100 - 1 being the level where no health effects are expected. However, the study is only a risk assessment, and results are not cause enough for Tribes to change their diets, said sources in the (Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish) Commission and EPA, who told NAR they are more concerned about addressing the causes of the contamination.”

Contacts: Patricia Cirone, EPA, (206)553-1597, cirone.patricia@epa.gov; Jonathan Modie, Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, (503)238-3573; Paul Johnston, U.S. Army Corps, Northwestern Division, (402)697-2552.

Regional News

Election of Tribal Operations Council:

Chief Brenda Commander, Houlton Band of Maliseets. Representative: Sharri Venno
Alternate: Governor Robert Newell,
Passamaquoddy Indian Township.
Representative: Trevor White

For a **Report on the May 12 - 15 6th Annual New England Tribal Environmental Training Conference in Presque Isle, Maine, hosted by the Aroostook band of Micmacs**, please access: www.micmac-epa.us

Report from the May 20 - 23, 2002 New England Regional Tribal Environmental Training in Westerly, R.I., hosted by the Narragansett Indian Tribe

An Elders Panel initiated the training and set the tone, based on the theme “Remembering and restoring the Relationship Between People and Mother Earth”. They discussed this relationship which is no longer in balance.

People are getting sick from poison in the air and the water. Animals and plants are no longer safe to eat. We have to buy water in little bottles. Because of this the diet has changed causing health problems such as diabetes and heart problems.

It was mentioned that Tribes have to be in competition for grant money to correct the problems despite the U.S. trust responsibility, most often with a very small staff to handle grant writing aside from all their other responsibilities..

Presentations included a Pequot fox activity study, impact on Nomans Island by previous Navy bombing activities, housing contamination problems (asbestos, lead and radon) at the previous Loring AFB site, survey of fish, shellfish and fish consumption, fish hatcheries, wildlife management in remote areas, fire management, working with surrounding communities toward conservation, water quality and wetlands, inventory of flora, fauna and vernal pools, storm hazards and safe drinking water quality. A need for Tribal inspector certification was stated.

A presentation of EMAP and REMAP (regional information) was on the agenda. This project can furnish integrated monitoring and assessments as to the source, location, load, and types of contaminants.

Report from the August 19 - 22, 2002 Native American Fish and Wildlife Society conference in Jackman, Maine, hosted by the Passamaquoddy Tribe

Various indoors and outdoors activities were included at this conference: A Tribal Elders cultural panel, presentations on a successful Tribal and State Partnership, the LifeLine project - a risk assessment computer program which can include cultural factors, Dioxin Reassessment facts related to Tribal notification, National and Tribal Fish Advisory, Emergency Training and Response, Enforcement and Compliance, Tribal Inspector Training and Tribal Homeland Security.

In his introductory speech, the new NAFWS Executive Director, Ira New Breast, Blackfeet from Montana, mentioned the success The Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife department has had in setting up MOAs and MOUs as a way to sustain the government-to-government relationship, and thereby assure sovereignty, rather than applying for grants competitively.

The USFWS representative urged Tribal people to state their needs directly to the Service rather than trying to fit these needs into a given grant structure. He stressed the flexibility of project funding.

In a one-day Tribal Conservation Officers Regional Shoot Competition (see photo on front page) which took place off-site on Passamaquoddy Tribal land, the winner was Joe Sockabasin of Passamaquoddy Indian Township who not only excelled in this skill but also was the lucky one to win a kayak at the raffle!

There were Tribal presentations on Tribal Salmon Habitat Restoration and need for compensation for the lost resources, on ways to protect wildlife resources, and on restoring habitats and wetlands. A representative of the newly federally recognized Eastern Pequots gave a presentation on their history and current situation on their Tribal lands.

Moose, deer, beaver and other wild animal species were observed by the conference participants as we toured the forested Passamaquoddy Tribal lands, accessible by logging roads.

Micmac IMPROVE air monitoring program

The Aroostook Band of Micmacs were recognized as “Operators of Distinction” for their IMPROVE project because in the year 2001 they were one of only 7 aerosol sites nationwide (out of 110 sites) and the only Tribe to achieve 100% data collection.

Data and information are available on the IMPROVE websites at:

<http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/improve/Data/data.htm>

<http://www.aqd.nps.gov/ard/impr/index.htm>

The Aroostook Band of Micmac’s Environmental Laboratory recently received certification as a State of Maine licensed drinking water laboratory. Certification of the laboratory marks an important milestone in environmental capacity building for the Tribe, and provides an important technical resource for the Tribe, with three public water supply wells located on Tribal land and over 200 Tribal homes served by individual drinking water wells.

The Micmac Environmental Laboratory has begun providing laboratory services to the other Maine Tribes and is looking forward to future collaborative projects to share its laboratory capacity. The laboratory is conveniently located less than one mile from full service offices of Federal Express, United Parcel Service, and the Northern Maine Regional Airport, and less than two miles from the U.S. Postal Service. This location enables the laboratory to quickly receive samples with short holding times, and ship samples containers on very short notice.

The laboratory is staffed by Mr. Fred Corey, Laboratory Director, Ms. Susan Peterson, Environmental Chemist and Laboratory Manager, and Ms. Heather Lyons, Environmental Technician.

Funding and technical support for establishment of the laboratory was provided by U.S. EPA, the Indian Health Service, and the Administration for Native Americans.

Erosion Control Project Completed

From the September 2002 issue of Skitkomiq Nutacomit, the Houlton Band of Maliseets’ Natural Resources Department newsletter:

“This August the Natural Resources Department contracted with Nickerson Construction Inc. of Limerick to implement a number of erosion control measures on a parcel of the Band’s trust land, commonly known as Pond Parcel, located just off the Foxcroft Road in

Littleton. Grant monies were sought through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act to construct erosion control measures to reduce the impact of the erosion. For additional information on this project please contact David Lombard at (207)532-4273 x220.

Tribe Celebrates Corn and Survival

Excerpt from the Metro, September 26, 2002)

“History records that this was the 327th year that the Narragansetts have held the Green Corn Thanksgiving in Rhode Island. But the Tribe has actually celebrated the arrival of fresh sweet corn, which they call ‘green’ corn, since long before the colonists began writing such things down. The Green Corn Thanksgiving is only one of the Tribe’s monthly Thanksgivings. There are 12 more, corresponding with the Narragansetts’ 13-month lunar calendar. The year begins in late February or early March when sap starts running in the trees, and the natural world begins to come alive.”

“But none of the Thanksgivings are as grand or as well attended as the Green Corn Thanksgiving. The festival is much more than a harvest celebration. It is a homecoming for many of the 2,700 Narragansetts who have scattered across the country.”

“The celebration’s continual existence is a declaration of Tribal identity and endurance. That continuity was tested when the Narragansett had to fight to regain their official Tribal status.”

(According to Lloyd Wilcox, who is the Tribe’s medicine man): “..state officials paid each Narragansett ‘\$15 and change’ in the early 1880s, stripped the Tribe of its status, and auctioned off much of its land”.

National News

Excerpts from American Indian Report March 2003:

(For more information, please access www.americanindianreport.com)

p. 18: **Weaving a Stable Community**. Maine Basket Weavers - basket weaving is not for whimps. Using brown ash and sweetgrass, making acorn baskets. David Sanipass, Micmac, is helping to keep the culture alive.

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The EPA award of a \$1.2-million grant to allow scientists to study 16 shellfish harvest areas in Washington state that are commonly used by the Tribal community will cover sediments, clams, Japanese oysters, butter clams and Dungeness crabs.

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International News

Canadian Government Files Defense Against Charges over Governance Act.

The following are excerpts from Native American Report, September 6, 2002:

“..the Canadian government ‘vehemently denies’ allegations that it tried to ‘intimidate or coerce the [Federation of Saskatchewan] Indian Nations and their organizations’ into compliance with the controversial First Nations Governance Act or Bill C-61, introduced June 14 by Indian Affairs and Northern Development (IAND) Minister Robert Nault”

The Saskatchewan Nations had charged, among other allegations in its July 16 lawsuit that they were ‘being asked to trade their rights for money’ and that the Canadian government threatened to cut back on federal finances extended to the nations. The governance Act, in the eyes of most First Nations, represents an unconstitutional attempt by the federal government to undermine their sovereignty by

forcing them to into corporate or municipal governments.”

OTTAWA (March 31, 2003) - Nineteen First Nations are signing the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management today, announces Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Chief Robert Louie of the Westbank First Nation and Chair of the Lands Advisory Board.

Learning Links

<http://www.epa.gov/ne/govt/tribes/index.html>
and www.epa.gov (We strive to continually update resource sites and links and welcome suggestions for additional informative websites).
www.etmdtraining.net
www.npic.orst.edu (pesticides)
www.americanindianreport.com
www.falmouthinstitute.com
www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/nedc/homepage.html
(water quality standards)
http://es.epa.gov/oeca/oceft/lib_files.html
(RCRA)
<http://www.epa.gov/ORC/NRMRL/Pubs/625R00008/625R000000.htm>
(EPA Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual);
www.epa.gov/sab
(EPA Science Advisory Board)
www.epa.gov/indian
(AIEO)
www.usetinc.org
(USET)
www.ncai.org
(National Congress of American Indians)
www.narf.org
(Native American Rights Fund)
www.asis.org
(American Society for Information on Science and Technology)

Other information and training sources:

NEW! FIFRA Inspector Training via the web -- Available online now from www.epa.gov/compliance/training/neti, this 3.5-hour Web-based course, designed for inspectors

in the FIFRA program, prepares students to perform FIFRA inspections and conduct fieldwork. Topics include lessons about jurisdiction and authority, the inspector's role, evidence gathering, types of inspections, inspection procedures, and report writing. Lesson quizzes and a comprehensive knowledge check reinforce learning. For technical help or questions, please contact Pat Straw at 202-564-2513.

Professional Exchange Program for Tribal Air Quality Environmental Professionals. Contact Alexis Bala-Spry at (928)523-8785 or fondaswimmer@nau.edu

Video training for new and experienced wastewater collection system operators. Six videos. Contact Office of Water Programs, CSU, Sacramento, CA at (916)278-6142.

Technical literature on the description of various innovative treatment technologies and waste characterization methods for assessment and cleanup of waste sites. Contact the Technology Innovation Office (TIO/OSWER) at (703)603-9910 or John Quander at quander.john@epamail.epa.gov

Recent and Upcoming Events

July

28 - 31 Forester Communications StormCon '03 for surface water quality professionals, San Antonio, TX. Contact: www.stormcon.com

28 - August 1 National Enforcement Training Institute, Enforcement Teamwork Regulations to Resolutions (to prepare for leadership roles in enforcement process), Shepardstown, WV. Contact: Alice Mims, 202-564-6069

August

4 - 8 FEMA's Emergency Management Institute, Emmitsburg, MD. Contact: Linda Straka 301-447-1162

5 - 7 The Northeast Regional Conference of the Native American fish and Wildlife Society,

Messena, NY. Contact: Jenna Herne, 518-358-5937 x 24 or jenna_herne@srmtenv.org
13 - 15 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center, GIS Introduction for Conservation Professionals, Shepardstown, WV. Contact: Marcia McNiff (303)876-7452 or http://training.fws.gov/tec/nctc_tec.html
24 - 29 Dioxin Boston 2003 - 23rd Annual International Symposium on Halogenated Environmental Organic Pollutants and POPs, Boston, MA. Access: www.dioxin2003.org

September

9 - 11 ORD Workshop on Mining Impacts to Native American Lands 2003, Reno, NV.

Contact: Alina Martin, 703-318-4678 or www.epa.gov/ttnrmrl

9 - 12 FIFRA (tentative), Mesa River, AZ. TBA
15 - 18 ATNI 50th Annual Conference, hosts are the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Pendleton, OR. Contact: 503-249-5770 and www.atntribes.org

18 - 20 Canadian Aboriginal Science & Technology Society 2003 Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. Contact: Philip McCloskey, www.usask.ca/casts 2003

October

1 - 3 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center, GIS Introduction for Conservation Professionals, Shepardstown, WV. Contact: Marcia McNiff (303)876-7452 or http://training.fws.gov/tec/nctc_tec.html

20-23 USET Annual Meeting & Expo, Hosted by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation at the Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket, CT. Contact: 800-369-9663 for reservations after August 1, 2003.

28 - 30 ORD First Interagency Conference on Research in the Watersheds, Benson, AZ. Contact: Claudia Walters 202-564-6762, William Kepner 703-798-2193 or kepner.william@epa.gov

November

